

2/1/2008

Grandmaster Kim,

Cheyenne and I are going to Colorado for 1 week (leaving today) for a vacation. I'll check e-mail about 1 time per day from our location.

I want to share with you an experience and reflection over the past few years. This experience is old news for you, but I am really still a white belt.

When I traveled to Okinawa in 2006 for a month, I wanted to research and see some of the root arts that make up the lineage of Chayon-Ryu. I was hoping to see something great and gain some insight into our forms. But, I found another lesson that I didn't expect to find...

When I visited some karate schools around Okinawa, I watched some classes (Shorin-Ryu, Goju-Ryu, and Judo).

Though I couldn't understand the language when the instructor taught, I could watch the mannerism and the principles of the movements taught.

Though the spirit and focus of the students was very good, the technique was very clunky (like an old, robotic, machine). I think the art could be great, but it wasn't great. It was a photograph to another time, unevolved or refined.

To compare: Many people in America like the very old cars, such as the Ford Model A or Model T. People always look to these cars as classics. But, in our modern times, driving one of these cars would not be a convenience or efficient with the incredible advancement in automobiles since the Model A or T. Who could drive around Houston in a Model T? I can appreciate the old car, but I don't want to drive one in my everyday life. I look at Chayon-Ryu compared to the karate I witnessed in Okinawa the same way - I give credit and appreciation to the root arts, but I don't want to practice the same way. Chayon-Ryu continues to evolve and improve to fit our changing world. I hope more people could see this and understand.

Robert